

Target: REC, NATRE, HMC, GSA, IAPS, MPs and Lords.

ISRSA Statement on Religious Studies: Executive Summary

The ISRSA affirms that Religious Studies is *an academically rigorous subject of vital relevance with a challenging and timeless voice*.

An academically rigorous subject

Religious Studies is primarily about a search for truth and as such its proper focus is on understanding and evaluating truth-claims made by theistic and non-theistic worldviews. This means that Religious Studies asks and seeks answers to the questions below and behind every other subject, enabling students to develop their own worldview. It is a critical, analytical and textual discipline which plays a unique and essential role within the curriculum.

Of vital relevance for human flourishing

Religious Studies enables students to understand and navigate the modern world, equipping them with the vital skills, essential virtues and crucial intellectual framework to enable themselves, others and wider society to flourish. As such it is an engaging and inclusive subject which, in tackling major theological-philosophical issues, is socially indispensable and personally meaningful.

With a challenging and timeless voice

One profound benefit of studying ideas, arguments and texts from outside one's own culture is that it enables one to think critically about prevailing cultural norms. Religious Studies is the one subject which enables us to ask the difficult questions which are essential for the rest of the curriculum. As such it is necessary to protect Religious Studies from serving political agendas so that it can act as a bulwark of a free society. In preserving the proper theological-philosophical emphasis, students are supported in developing their own worldview; this has huge social and psychological benefits which would not be achieved if these were the primary objectives.

So we maintain our conviction that Religious Studies is a *rigorous academic subject of vital relevance with a challenging and timeless voice* and as such it deserves a central place in any adequate conception of the school curriculum.